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ABSTRACT

School reform efforts to date have not always resulted in meaningful change. This book presents findings from an ethnographic study that examined the change process in three schools undertaking systemic reform. The schools included the Hull Junior-Senior High School, a primarily white public school in a recession-battered community; the Academy at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, a multi-ethnic, urban public school; and Brimmer and May, a private school in a wealthy suburb. Data-collection methods included observation; document analysis; and interviews with teachers, administrators, students, and parents. The focus was on ninth-grade classes. The first three chapters describe in detail the environment of each school. Chapter 4 offers conclusions about the ways in which schools change. Findings indicate that the three essential components of a successful school-improvement plan included: (1) establishing clear academic goals based on developing and assessing students' competencies; (2) creating a caring community with explicit core values; and (3) encouraging many forms of collaboration. Aspects of a new vision of educational change--education for a changing economy, for continuing learning, for world citizenship, and for personal growth and health--are discussed. The roles of higher education, business, government, and the media are examined. (LMI)

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